SECRETARY OF WAR
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WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

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MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOW FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Implementation of General/Flag Officer Grade Reductions for Military Medical Leadership

The Department of War has a duty to ensure Service member health and maintain a structure to support this mission. After reviewing the roles of the Surgeons General of the Army, Navy, and Air Force and the Director, Defense Health Agency (DHA), it is apparent that military leadership resources are not allocated commensurate with organizational duties, and this misallocation results in unnecessary bureaucracy in our military medical community.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114–328) reassigned the administration and management of all military medical treatment facilities from the Military Departments (and their respective Surgeons General) to DHA. The Surgeons General are now principally responsible for recruiting, training, and equipping military medical forces and providing medical advice to the Secretaries of the Military Departments and the Director, DHA.

To align with this focused mission, I direct that each Surgeon General hold the grade of major general or rear admiral. A higher grade may not be justified by dual hatting a Surgeon General, for example, as commander of a medical command. Incumbents with the temporary grade of lieutenant general may keep it until they depart, but future Surgeons General will hold the reduced grade. The Director, DHA, shall remain a lieutenant general or vice admiral with joint experience in accordance with all applicable statutes and regulations.

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